

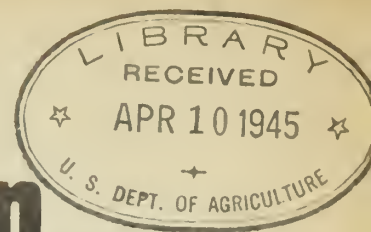
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I hope your imagination is in good working order today because I am going to take you on a little journey into the future.

Having recently come from the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture at Hot Springs, Virginia, I am in a mood of hope and tempted to forecast what may be the outcome of that conference. Prophecy, of course, is a dangerous business. Never mind. It is a good thing to let yourself go once in a while and think of what the world will be like if we have the good sense to make it what it ought to be.

So please project yourself into the year 2043 -- a hundred years from now -- and imagine that you are listening, not to me, but to Mr. X, a happy descendant of mine, who is talking on the Farm and Home Hour of that day.

Mr. X is something of a philosopher, with a liking for history; and on this June 18th, 2043, he is taking a long look into the past and telling what he thinks about the world in general, and especially about our generation -- you and me, who are living now, in 1943.

And this is what Mr. X says, 100 years from now:

"The people of the early 1940's had reason to consider themselves the most unfortunate of men. They were engaged in a war that had engulfed the whole world. Their sons, yes, and in many cases their daughters, too, were on far battlefronts. Their cities were bombed; whole countrysides were laid waste, the farms destroyed, the inhabitants pressed into slavery or left as wandering, starving wrecks of human beings.

"That war was the climax of a long period of what we of the year 2043 could call blindness and mismanagement of world affairs. It had been

preceded by another world war, only a little less violent and widespread, a quarter of a century before. In between, there was a disastrous economic depression during which nations tried vainly to wall themselves off from one another and live each to itself. Businesses collapsed. Millions of men in many countries had no work to do and did not know where their next meal was coming from. Yet in many places, during that time of depression, food was destroyed and farmers had to hold down production because so many people could not afford to buy the simplest needs of life.

"Yes, that was a strange world in which sanity and reason seemed to be at their lowest ebb."

(This is Mr. X -- remember -- speaking in the year 2043.)

"Nevertheless, we owe a great debt to the people of that generation. Because, having hit the bottom of world confusion and anarchy, they finally made up their minds that things were going to be different.

"We today, in the year 2043, have had a century of peace. We have orderly trade between nations; each produces what it is best suited to produce and exchanges its surplus with other nations in return for what it needs. Industries all over the world are kept running at capacity. There is plenty of work for everyone, and in fact our chief trouble is to find enough workers to make all the things we could use.

"The people in every nation are reasonably well nourished. Not perfectly nourished, to be sure; there is still a great deal we can do in that direction. But on the whole, we are doing well. And as a consequence, we know, by comparing measurements, that human beings the world over are bigger, stronger, and more vigorous than they were a hundred years ago.

There is far less sickness. The old-time deficiency diseases that affected millions of people a hundred years ago have finally been wiped out. The death of infants at birth, and of mothers in childbirth, has been reduced to a negligible percentage -- because all mothers can now have the food they need to build new life. We live longer, on the average, than our ancestors did -- and what is more important, we stay young longer. It is safe to say that on the whole we are mentally more alert and psychologically happier -- partly because we have enough of the right kind of food to keep us in top notch health.

"As for our farmers in 2043 -- they are out to produce all they possibly can, and doing a good job of it -- which is what every farmer worth his salt has always wanted to do. The production of the foods needed for health -- milk, meat, eggs, vegetables, fruits -- has gone up enormously the world over in the hundred years since 1943. As a result, our farms are more diversified and we are able to take far better care of our soil. At the same time, the production of staple crops like bread grains has gone up too, until it is now truly in balance with world needs. And those staple crops are produced in the parts of the world best suited to them, so that markets are assured.

"We in the 20 hundreds have been able to do these things in agriculture for three main reasons: First, because research has been actively pushed everywhere to make increased production possible; the use of scientific methods, improved crops and livestock, and modern equipment has been gradually spreading all over the world. Second, because the masses of the world's people can at last afford to buy what farmers produce. Third, because the

nations that had terribly overcrowded agricultural populations in the past have gradually given more and more of these people a chance to work at other things -- in the year 2043, we don't so often see a family trying hopelessly to scrape a living from a miserable little piece of land, whereas there were millions of such families a hundred years ago.

"In fact, the last century has been a period of amazingly rapid expansion and quickening of the whole world economy. We now have a degree of international cooperation that would have been thought impossible back in 1943. And by working together, nations have been able to accomplish more than the boldest visionary of that day dared dream of.

"But it was the people of the 1940's who began all this. Like the pioneers who first settled our North American continent, they had courage and vision. Even before the Allies won the last great war, men and women of many nations began getting together in international conferences, at the call of the United States of America. They were determined, those people, to make a better, saner world -- and first of all, a world free from want and fear. Immediately after the Allied victory, the work began in earnest. The rest is a matter of history.

"Much of that whole great movement, I believe, was due to a new recognition of the place of science in the modern world.

"Even back in 1943, which we today think of as a rather crude and primitive period, scientists had discovered a great deal about what human beings need to be healthy and vigorous, and a great deal about how the earth can be made to produce what they need. But in the days before the 1940's science was never allowed to do all it could do in any nation -- only a little

here and a little there -- except during a war, when it had to be used to the limit for national survival. Then suddenly large numbers of people began to see how foolish this was -- that science, which could do so much for human betterment, should be fully used only during great periods of destruction.

"Out of the achievements and the suffering of that war came a vision of new possibilities. Then all over the world there came a conviction that the vision could be made real. It was only a step then for people to set to work to make the vision real. And improvement began at once.

"Improvement is still going on. For though we, in 2043, have advanced far -- we know that there is much more to be done. We live in a good world -- but like the people of 1943, we are determined to make it better."

Well -- thank you, Mr. X.

Will you, Mr. X, in the year 2043, be saying things like this? Or shall we human beings still have a world of confusion and anarchy, of war and of want, a hundred years from now?

To no small extent, it is up to us of this generation. This is a fateful time in world history. Our decisions today will shape the world of our children.

For my part, as I said, I have recently attended the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture -- one of those conferences to which Mr. X referred. And I am hopeful.
